



INTERNATIONAL
COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE

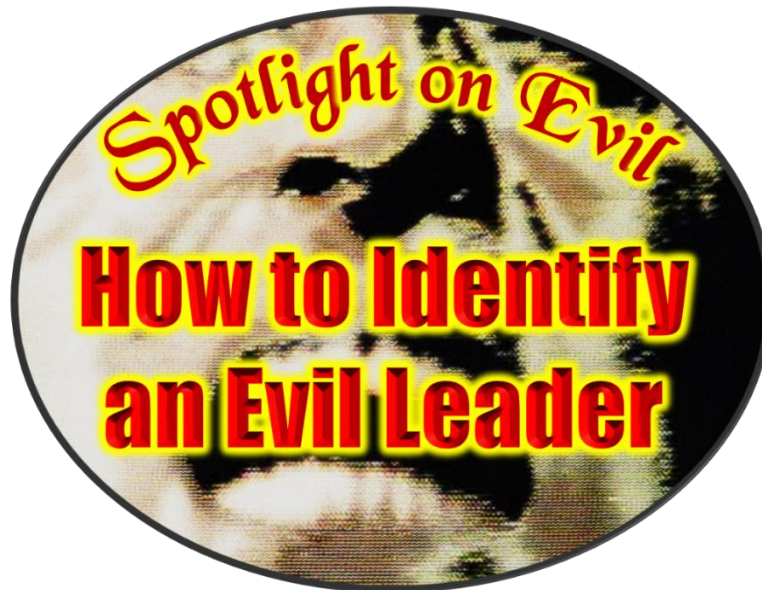
www.ICLIInstitute.org
+1 (239) 537-6441



STRATEGIC ALERT

By Robert Porter Lynch

Strategic Alert #9



How do you know a Leader is "Evil?"

Supposedly determining whether a leader is "evil" is a complex and subjective task involving a myriad of evaluations of someone's actions, presuming their intentions, extrapolating their fundamental beliefs. The less we know about someone the more difficult the task. However, the more we know, the easier it gets especially when we understand that the pattern of evil leaders has not changed since the dawn of recorded history 3000 years ago. Ancient Hebrew texts in the Old Testament describe the same behavior we saw in Adolf Hitler and Stalin, and, sadly in Putin, Trump, and other dictators today. And we are still seduced by them, much to our demise.

Version 2. Copyright 2017-2023 Robert Porter Lynch & International Leadership Institute

STRATEGIC ALERT: How to Identify Evil Leaders

As one who has devoted his life to understanding collaboration, trust, and leadership, my friend, and mentor, Prof. Paul R. Lawrence at Harvard Business School asked me to do a deep dive into evil leaders for an article we were co-authoring. He introduced me to the work of several of his colleagues at the University of British Columbia (where coincidentally I was also teaching).

Professors Robert Hare and Paul Babiak had recently written their legendary book *“Snakes in Suits – When Psychopaths go work.”* I was introduced to their work on the DARK TRIAD, a set of character or personality traits that are shared by leaders who wreak havoc in their paths. While not the focus of my current work, the continuing grief caused by evil has not abated. Thus, I must share my point of view in the interests of helping others on this planet prevent new dark leaders from emerging and stymying existing evil from damaging the future of humanity.

One need not be a professional psychiatrist nor psychologist to spot evil. Three basic criteria can be used by any reasonably wise and educated person to perceive and assess their disorder:

Dark Triad

1. Megalomaniacal Narcissist

- **Self-Aggrandizement:** Their own insecurity about themselves causes them to bellow and bloviate -- pumping themselves up. They always look bigger, grander, more powerful than they really are. Strangely, this character trait attracts others who are insecure by vicariously latching on to their leader’s outlandish sense of power and control. They are terribly insecure, and thus become bullies to mask their insecurities
- **Lack of Vision & Moral Compass:** Evil leaders have little or no vision for their people nor future generations; the idea of the “greater good” only means what’s good for them. They lack a moral compass because the only ethics are “might makes right.” Without any inner guidance, they revert to any possible way to seize power and control.
- **Resistance to Change and Progress:** Evil leaders will fiercely fight any alteration of the status quo that might threatens the authority. They will suppress dissent, stifle innovation, or cling to outdated ideologies, never concerned about human injustice. They inherently disregard any future long-term consequences of their actions because, to their perception, every move is a threat, and immediate affront to their power.

2. Manipulative Machiavellian

- **Manipulation and Deception:** Evil leaders are addicted to manipulation and deception to achieve their goals. They will spread misinformation, exploit people's fears or prejudices, and use charisma to deceive others into supporting their harmful schemes.
- **Destruction and Chaos:** Evil leaders actively promote destruction and chaos, often through violence or the subversion of social order. This often involves starting wars, inciting violence, or undermining institutions that provide stability and security. Then they take credit for solving the chaos with stricter laws and imposition of military order.

STRATEGIC ALERT: How to Identify Evil Leaders

- **Fear & Power to Motivate:** Because of their own insecurity, which fills them with fear, and their abject lack of vision for the greater good of society, they motivate with fear, the lowest of primal reptilian instincts, not with inspiration, not with values.
- **Corruption:** Evil leaders, lacking a moral compass, always surround themselves with comrades who are similarly deficient, thus forming a “corrupt network of power” for personal gain. By consolidating power, they formulate a corrupt bargain among other power-elites, which is held together by a web of lies, bribery, embezzlement, nepotism, or using their position of power to enrich themselves at the expense of others. Those who object, are eliminated in some manner. The well-being of their society is of little matter. No democracy can survive under their corrupt rule.
- **Pathological Liars:** Malicious Leaders will invent any story to make themselves look good or to diminish any rivals. Truth is irrelevant because it causes people to think rather than accept their ready-made conclusion and mind-manipulations. This is the basis for their Propaganda Machine. (see America Befuddled).

3. Sadistic Psycho/Sociopath

- **Intentional harm to others:** The sadistic side of evil is revealed when a leader intentionally causes harm to others, either physically, financially, or emotionally. To consolidate power, they discredit, jail, deport or annihilate intellectuals, priests, generals, opposing politicians, lawyers, and educators. They create policies leading to widespread suffering; and genocide is legitimized and legalized.
- **Disregard for human life and dignity:** Wanton leaders consistently shows a disregard for the sacredness of the human spirit, treating others as objects or just a tool for their own ends. This could manifest in various ways, such as denying basic human rights, changing laws to throw people in jail, and fostering a culture of fear and oppression.
- **Without Conscience:** By definition, a psycho/sociopath lacks a conscience, having no empathy or compassion for the suffering of others. They may be indifferent to the pain they cause or even derive pleasure from it, leading to cruel and inhumane actions.
- **Spew Hate:** Because they have no capacity for real love, they see the world as a place filled with hatred, thus encouraging others to hate along with them, from which they receiving the vicarious emotional thrill of the collective hatred.

These three traits all weave into each other, each feeding the demonic cycle of destruction.

But before pulling the trigger on your assessment of evil leaders, a wise person will consult others who understand personality disorders before making a final judgement.

Horrific Impact: Ultimately, the true measure of an evil leader lies in the lasting damage of their actions on society and future generations. The extent of the harm they cause, the deaths and destruction they leave behind, and the erosion of moral values all crush the divine spirit that constitutes the best in humanity. It’s time to stop civilization’s plagued by the Dark Triad.